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in Thuringia, October 24, 1808, and became at an early age a student of natural sciences, giving especial attention to mineralogy. From 1827 to 1831 he studied at the Academy of Mining in Freiburg, where he was appointed professor in 1842. "The Dendroliths," his first work, was published in 1832. From 1832 to 1832 he was engaged with Naumann in the preparation of the "Geognostic Chart of the Kingdom of Saxony." His later works have been of much value, among them being an "Introduction to the Study of Geognosy and Geology."

GEOGRAPHY AND TRAVELS.¹

ASIA.—Col. Prejevalsky, after being detained at Zaisan on the Chinese frontier by deep snows, left there on the 21st of March last, and passing over a barren desert and along the river Urungu had reached, when last heard from, the river Buguluk in the Southern Altai mountains. The climate is characterized by frost at night and heat and storm during the day.

The expedition of the Count Széchényi had, according to recent dispatches, reached Suchau, on the frontier of Kansu, without impediment, coming by way of Si-ngan the capital of Shen-si and Lan-chow, in Kansu, over passes 9000 feet high, where the temperature fell to thirteen degrees below zero (Fahr.). Here, however, they were refused a safe conduct to the lake Lob-Nor, the Viceroy declaring his inability to protect the expedition. Count Széchényi had, therefore, to abandon his proposed journey across the Kum-Tag to the Lob-Nor. He hoped, however, to start shortly for Lhassa by way of the Koko-Nor.

M. Woëikof has sent to the French Geographical Society a memoir on the Oxus question. After having studied the problem on the spot, the Russian geographer feels certain that the suppression of the Caspian mouth was produced not by a gradual elevation of the country, but by an accumulation of deposits in the bed of the river and the immense drainage produced by the development of irrigation in the Khivan oasis. He feels certain that the restoration of the former state of things would be a very easy work. The restoration of the Caspian, he believes, would reduce the area of the Aral to one-third of its present extent, nor would the change be altogether detrimental to the prosperity of the surrounding countries. When the countries situated between the Caspian and Aral basins shall have become civilized and have utilized for agricultural purposes the waters of all the rivers which feed the interior seas, the Aral will exist no longer, and the Caspian will be reduced to two lakes of nearly elliptical form. The Volga will be joined to the Oxus by a straight canal passing by the eastern side of the Caspian, and its vessels will reach, without transshipment, the northern part of Afghanistan.

In the discussion that followed the reading of this paper, M.

¹ Edited by ELLIS H. YARNALL; Philadelphia.

D'Abaddie, speaking of the determination of altitudes by the species of plants growing at various heights, alluded to by M. Woëikoff, said that during his travels in Abyssinia, after having made known to several botanists the fact that vegetation was distributed with great regularity on the mountains, he was invited by some botanists to verify the height of a mountain that he had indicated from native information as lower than a neighboring peak. The trees which had been indicated as growing on the summits of the two mountains showed that the lower one ought to have been the higher. The two mountains were surveyed hypsometrically, and the results showed that the botanists were right and the natives wrong.

In the annual address on the progress of geography at the anniversary meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, Mr. C. R. Markham stated that "an important advance towards the solution of one of the chief Asiatic geographical problems has been made this year, namely, the discovery of another section of the unexplored course of the Brahmapootra. One of Col. Walker's indefatigable native explorer's has traced and surveyed the Sanpu, the great river of Thibet, for two hundred miles beyond Chetang, the most eastern point to which it had hitherto been followed. Here the river turned southwards into the hills and between this point and that reached by Capt. Wilcox on the Dihong, in his journey from the Assam plain, in 1825, there is a comparatively short gap. But in that interval there is a fall of 8000 feet and upwards, so that the complete discovery of the still unknown portion will probably disclose a scene of wonderful sublimity—one of the last and perhaps the grandest of nature's secrets.

LIEUT. WHEELER'S SURVEY WORK IN OREGON, 1878.—Mr. J. W. Goad, one of the survey party, sends the following account of Lieut. Wheeler's operations in Oregon during the past year, to the Royal Geographical Society :

"On the road northwards from Reno, in Nevada, along the Californian eastern boundary, Pyramid lake, which receives the Truckee river and has no visible outlet, was explored ; it is forty miles long, of immense depth, and conspicuous for its white columnar rocks, and is probably the least known of the North American lakes. It appears an open question whether there is a subterranean drainage in this part of North-west Nevada, or whether the dry climate evaporates the surplus water in the valleys. Crossing the volcanic Warner range, the oasis of Surprise valley, a fertile space of fifty miles in the midst of an arid sage-bush country, was visited and its thermal springs examined. Oregon was entered near Mount Bidwell, a bluff terminating the Warner range to the north, and here the party was organized, one of its objects (approved by Gen. Humphreys) being to make a complete reconnaissance of the Cascade mountains and a sur-

vey of the area between them and the 119th meridian. After crossing the arid and volcanic Oregon desert to the alkaline lake Albert (where the party narrowly escaped Indian attack) a peculiar difference was observed between the valleys of the Chewan-can and Summer lakes, the latter though only 300 feet lower, and but a few miles distant, having a considerably higher temperature. Its waters were strongly impregnated with borax, etc. The Klamath lakes were also visited and found to present the same typical features as Pyramid lake, undoubtedly belonging to the Great Basin plateau. At Klamath Lieut. Wheeler divided the party, himself exploring the Cascade range parallel to the Pacific coast, and Lieut. Symons, Mr. Goad and others carrying the triangulation to the north. Mount Pitt, 4000 feet above the country level and 10,000 feet above the sea, was scaled with great difficulty on account of lava, fallen timber and rock-slides; the latter are accumulations of *débris* held in position by some slight and unseen projection, and only requiring the weight of a man or removal of a stone to set them in motion.

"From another peak, Crater lake came in sight—a vast body of water confined in vertical cliffs 2000 feet in height; its area is about fifty miles and the geological evidence indicated comparatively recent volcanic action. Proceeding northwards many huge piles of rock, deep snow banks and innumerable small lakes were found, the party, on one occasion, passing through a frozen snow tunnel seventy to eighty feet thick. This work on the mountain crest was at last stopped by the dense forests and tangled undergrowth, thousands of acres of which are often set on fire by the Indians when driving the game, the entire consumption of oxygen in the woods causing the flame to rise and form a sheet miles in length and from one hundred to five hundred feet high.

"Leaving the mountains for the Deschutes valley, it was found that the turbulent river of that name, after apparently emptying itself into a lake with no outlet, percolated through piled up masses of lava on its shores, and reappeared ten miles further north. It can never be navigable on account of its numerous cascades and rapids. Mount Jefferson was visited but found impracticable from the lateness of the season. On the road from its base to Dalles, on the Columbia river, the warm springs, much visited by Indians, were examined—their waters collect in basins which are impregnated with a green mineral substance. Interesting data concerning Mount Hood (12,000 feet) were obtained from Mr. Walker, of the Warm Spring agency, who had ascended it. Far above the snow line, hot steam issues from craters on its side; five hundred feet from the top is a large basin with the main crater giving out sulphurous steam. Other craters and huge glaciers exist also on its south-east side. The White river, which rises in Mount Hood, owes its name to a sediment of pulverized pumice which is washed far down the

Columbia river in quantities sufficient to form white dunes on its shores by the action of the winds. Its falls were some 180 feet high.

"At Dalles a base line was measured and a series of triangles carried into Washington Territory. In summing up the capabilities of Oregon, which, west of the Cascades, are well known to be very great, it is observed that although to the east of that range the rain-fall is not great, the land is very fertile in the Deschutes basin, and the supply of water for irrigation abundant."

ARCTIC EXPLORATION.—In 1880 Lieut. Weyprecht of the last Austro-Hungarian Polar Expedition, intends starting for Novaya Zemlya, to remain at least one year, to take meteorological, hydrographical and other observations. The expenses are to be defrayed by Count Wilczek, who may himself accompany the lieutenant.

On June 3, 1879, the Dutch North Polar Expedition again sailed from Amsterdam on board the schooner *Willem Barentz*. They will first visit Barentz's Ice-haven and erect a suitable monument to his memory. A voyage into the Kara sea will be attempted. Meteorological, zoölogical and other observations and deep-sea soundings will be made as on her previous voyage last season.

Capt. A. H. Markham left England early in May last for Tromsö, whence he sailed in the little yacht *Ishjörn* to undertake an examination of the ice between Spitzbergen and Novaya Zemlya, and ascertain the practicability of reaching the west side of Franz Josef Land and advancing further north along its coast.

The steamer *Jeannette* sailed from San Francisco on July 8th for Behring strait. This vessel was formerly H. M. S. *Pandora*, and under Capt. Allen Young made two voyages to the Arctic regions. She is 420 tons burden, and has been most liberally equipped and supplied for her present voyage by her owner, Mr. James Gordon Bennett, at an expense of \$300,000. By an act of Congress she has been enrolled as a vessel of the U. S. Navy, and the officers and crew are subject, therefore, to naval discipline. They are thirty-two in number. Lieut. George W. De Long is in command; he was, in 1873, the navigator of the *Funiata* that, with the *Tigriss*, went in search of the *Polaris*. Among the officers are a meteorologist and a naturalist. The crew are picked men, and several of them have had experience in Arctic navigation. The *Jeannette* arrived at Ounalashka in the Aleutian islands on August 2d. After coaling there, she would proceed to St. Michael's, Alaska, where dogs and sledges were to be shipped.

The Franklin Search party landed from the ship *Eothen* on the north shore of Hudson's bay, near Depot island, on August 9, 1878. During the following months careful surveys were made of the adjacent coast from Cape Fullerton to Marble island, and journeys taken into the interior. On April 1, 1879, the party

with four additional Esquimaux and their families, making in all sixteen souls with four sledges and about sixty dogs, started for King William Land.

GEOGRAPHICAL NEWS.—The long sojourn of the Russian troops in Bulgaria and Roumelia has been fruitful of results to geographical knowledge. A series of astronomical and geodetic observations have fairly completed a network of triangulation and maps, based on the data thus obtained, which will soon appear.—The council of the Royal Geographical Society have determined to provide instruction in surveying and mapping, including the fixing of positions by astronomical observations, for those of their countrymen about to visit the less known portions of the globe.—Commander V. L. Cameron, the well known African explorer, the *Academy* states, has made an interesting journey through Syria and along the Tigris to Bagdad, in order to ascertain the practicability of a railroad from the Mediterranean to the Persian gulf. He found that there were no physical difficulties in the way, and that the local traffic alone would prove remunerative.—The committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund (English) will issue a subscriptional large paper edition of their survey of Western Palestine. The number of copies will be limited to 250. The work will comprise six or more quarto volumes and the great map in twenty-six sheets. The price will be twelve guineas. No cheaper edition is to be published. The American Survey map of Eastern Palestine is to appear in the same form a little later.—H. M. S. *Alert*, Sir George Nares commander, on her voyage to Magellan straits, in the autumn of 1878, took soundings over the Hotspur and Victoria banks. These singular isolated shoal banks, lying between the parallels of 18° and 21° S., and distant fifty to sixty leagues from the South American continent, average in their depths from twenty-five to thirty and thirty-five fathoms, and so far as explored are composed of dead coral worn down to a level surface and smoothed with a very thin incrustation of fine *Polyzoa*. The observations of Sir George Nares lead him to infer that these banks were once reefs of living coral with shallow water over them which have subsided to their present depth, but that the subsidence was too rapid for the reef-building coral animals to keep pace therewith, and the banks are now at too great a depth for the coral to exist.

MICROSCOPY.¹

THE POSTAL MICROSCOPICAL CLUB.—This club, whose work was suspended last winter on account of postal difficulties, has resumed its operations again. It was presumed by many that the effect of the new postal law which went into effect last spring would be to permit the mailing of slides as heretofore. It was found, however, that the single wooden boxes which had always been

¹ This department is edited by Dr. R. H. WARD, Troy, N. Y.